

REMARKS

By the entry of this amendment, claims 2-4 have been cancelled and new claims 13-19 have been added to further claim the features of the disclosed invention. The remaining claims have been amended to clarify the claim language.

The examiner has raised an objection to the declaration. Applicant submits concurrently herewith a substitute declaration.

The examiner has raised an objection to the abstract as being too long. Applicant has amended the abstract.

Claims 1 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Tajima et al. (5,809,918). Claims 1 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Tajima et al. (5,706,747). Claims 9-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tajima et al. '747. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections.

The claimed invention differs from the cited references in a number of ways. For example, as set forth in claim 1, the invention includes the following features neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited references.

First, as a structure separate from the pair of supporting leg sections, the main frame is constructed of upper and lower support members that are integrally joined at their respective opposite ends by welding via a pair of joint members. With this structural arrangement, the main frame can be transported to a desired assembling place with the supporting leg sections left unassembled to the main frame, i.e. with the main frame and supporting leg sections left separated from each other. By thus transporting the main frame and supporting leg sections in a mutually-separated state, the main frame and the supporting leg sections can be packed into small-bulk packages, so that the invention allows the main frame and supporting leg sections to be transported with ease and also permits efficient use of a storage space at the time of the transportation. For example, in cases where a plurality of the main frames of a same type having a same shape and a plurality of the supporting leg sections of a same type having a same shape are packed at the same time, the present invention can reduce the overall package size or volume as compared to the conventional technique where completed machine frames have to be packed as they are. In addition, the present invention allows a greater number of the main frames and supporting leg sections to be loaded into a limited storage space for transportation. Thus, for the same number of the machine frames, the present invention allows these machine frames to be transported in smaller-bulk packages than the conventional technique, thereby achieving enhanced efficiency.

Second, in the main frame, the upper support member for supporting thereon a plurality of machine heads in juxtaposed relation to each other and the lower support member for supporting thereon a plurality of rotary hook bases in juxtaposed relation to each other are integrally joined by welding via a pair of joint members provided at their respective opposite ends, and that mounting holes are formed in predetermined positions of the upper support member for mounting the individual machine heads. With this structural arrangement, not only respective mounting positions of the machine heads can be secured in advance, but also predetermined positional relationship between the upper support member for supporting thereon the individual machine heads and the lower support member for supporting the plurality of rotary hook bases corresponding to the machine heads can be secured in advance. Consequently, in final assembly operation, a human operator only has to merely assemble the pair of supporting leg sections to the main frame without caring about fine positional relationship between the machine heads and the rotary hook bases; namely, the present invention is quite suited for readily affecting the final assembly in a desired place outside a plant.

Third, the supporting leg sections are mutually separated and attached to the left and right ends, respectively, of the main frame to support the main frame in a substantially horizontal orientation at a predetermined height. With this structural arrangement, supporting leg sections of a same construction can be used for different types of main frames that have different lengths in a left-right direction (namely, main frames differing in the number of machine heads mountable thereon). Thus, in mass-producing various types of machine frames that differ in the number of machine heads mountable thereon, the use of the supporting leg sections of the same construction can significantly reduce the necessary manufacturing cost.

Each of the cited references fails to teach or suggest the aforementioned features of the present invention, and the advantageous benefits attainable by the present invention would not be expectable from the disclosure of the cited references. In view of the above, none of the references taken single or in combination discloses or suggests the claimed invention. The rejection of the claims is therefore improper and should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

All of the claims in this case are believed to be in condition for allowance, notice of which is respectfully urged.

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